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ABSTRACT

Reported is the progress of a 5-year project to provide vocational rehabilitation services to a group of quadriplegic, triplegic, and paraplegic clients in a university setting. Rehabilitative nursing, physical therapy, medical consultation, occupational therapy, tutoring, and other services are provided in a special residential unit, for the purpose of allowing the clients to successfully compete in a university academic setting (University of California at Berkeley). Discussed are the program to develop the ability to live independently, academic goals and eligibility at the university, staff, and funds and financial expenses of the project. (KW)

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REHABILITATION RESEARCH REPORT

Robert E. Howard, Director
DEPT. OF REHABILITATION
Human Relations Agency
State of California

Vocational Rehabilitation Of The Severely Disabled In A University Setting

FSS 69-11-3
Nov. 18, 1969

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REHABILITATION RESEARCH REPORTS

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION OF THE SEVERELY DISABLED IN A UNIVERSITY SETTING

Progress Report for Fiscal Year 1968-69

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

Numerous rehabilitation research and demonstration projects are being carried on in California. Many of these projects are testing and developing new concepts, methods, and techniques which are of potential importance to counselors. In an effort to provide Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors with timely and pertinent information regarding these projects, the Research and Statistics Section of the California State Department of Rehabilitation has instituted this series of Rehabilitation Research Reports. Written jointly by a research staff member and a rehabilitation counselor or other non-research staff, these brief reports will be presented in terms which are especially suited to non-technical field staff personnel. More detailed and technical information can always be obtained by contacting the Research and Statistics Section. Additional copies of the report can be obtained by returning the form provided.

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This project is 90% funded by the federal Social and Rehabilitation Service through provisions of Section 3 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act. Its total annual cost is approximately $35,000. It is a five year project expected to run from February 1, 1968 through January 31, 1973.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION OF THE SEVERELY DISABLED IN A UNIVERSITY SETTING

Progress Report for Fiscal Year 1968-69

PURPOSE:

The original purpose of this project was to make a Rehabilitation Residential Unit available for those severely disabled quadriplegic, triplegic and paraplegic students attending the University of California at Berkeley. This purpose has been enlarged to include the evaluation of prospective severely disabled students who can demonstrate the greatest potential to effectively utilize undergraduate and graduate studies leading to professional skill level occupations.

This project has required the cooperation of the Department of Rehabilitation, the Department of Social Welfare, including the local Medi-Cal Consultant, and the Administration of the University which is willing to make the necessary exceptions to meet the needs of the severely disabled who can utilize the University to develop their potential to handle professional jobs.

METHODOLOGY:

With the help of the Department of Social Welfare and the University Student Health Service the following have been implemented.

1. Move to Independent Living: Each student is issued an electric wheelchair which best meets his needs. The rehabilitation nurse, physiatrist consultant, and the students all share the responsibility of coming to a consensus as to which type of motorized wheelchair will best suit the needs of that particular student. (The Motorette Unit which attaches to a regular heavy duty E & J wheelchair supplied with semiballoon tires, including an extra tire in case of flats and carried in a bag behind the chair, appears to be the most popular and useful model for our students who have to get around on a fairly hilly campus.)

   Of the 11 quadriplegics in the project, two are amyotonia congenitas (a rare disease marked by general hypotonia of the muscles), one is a quadriplegia polio who spends up to 16 hours a day in an iron lung, and the other 8 are quadriplegics resulting from traumatic cord injury. Although all the clients are quadriplegics, there are wide differences in functional ability. It is our belief that the reorganization of services made possible by transferring of the financial responsibility of medical treatment and supplies to ATD resulted in real gains on the part of the clients - both in terms of physical and emotional independence.

1. Move to Independent Living (continued): Room and board was found to be expensive. At first the Cowell Residence Program was set up in such a way that the client himself had to meet the difference between the $350 room and board charge (which included an RN on duty from 11 at night until 8 in the morning and one orderly on duty from 12 to 2 and 4 to 6 in the afternoon) and his ATD grant of $87.00 a month for room and board. It was discovered that actual room and board costs were $226.20 a month -- $26.00 towards the RN's services and $58.60 towards the services of the orderly. Previously the clients were asked to go to the Board of Supervisors at the local welfare departments to ask for this difference of $179.20 a month. There were some counties that were more liberal than others. As it occurred, eligible clients were being turned away because they lacked the monetary assistance for their preliminary room and board costs. In addition to the $87.00 room and board which is allowed by ATD, each client is usually allowed $54.50 at this time for incidental needs. It is very important not to cut into this sum as these people need clothes, cosmetics, and money for normal socializing on the college campus. In addition, each client is allowed a maximum attendant care allowance of $300 per month which, on the basis of usual charges of $2.00 an hour, amounts to 150 hours a month or roughly 5 hours a day in addition to the above mentioned care given by the hospital.

Since ATD has a legal limit which is less than the actual cost of room and board for a program client, the Department of Rehabilitation is paying the difference of $179.20 per month. The Department of Rehabilitation sponsorship of this cost differential will not affect the ATD grant since it is not considered income. These costs meet the requirements of income and maintenance for the Welfare Department. The Welfare Public Service Manual, Section 4-111-474 states ". . . funds provided by public and private agencies to assist with a rehabilitation plan not available for any other purpose are exempt from consideration as income . . ."

We now have 11 students in this project who started out living at Cowell. Four students have been able to move to independent living in apartments close to the campus. As a result of being at Cowell Hospital, they have been taught how to hire and train attendants. It is not the intent of the program for the student to live on the third floor wing of Cowell Memorial Hospital for his entire time in college. It is hoped that with the knowledge gained from this type of living, under the direction of the rehabilitation nurse, the student will become more able to make his own decisions, and eventually be able to move out into the surrounding community near the campus and find out if he can live independently in an apartment.

2. Academic Goals and Eligibility: The University of California is on the quarterly system. Most project clients are taking between ten and fourteen units. Two students are in graduate school. Most students with verbal WAIS IQ's of less than 120 seem to consistently get C averages. Most studenst with IQ's of 130, are receiving grades that average B+. With a college average at this level obtained by a student participating in an active campus program, we find that they have a good chance of being accepted in graduate school which will lead to professional level occupations. It has been our experience that unless a severely disabled person can be trained in areas where he will be able to earn between $12,000 and $20,000 a year, he will be unable to meet his every-day living expenses, including attendant care, to enable a savings of public monies. In order to determine eligibility for this type of a training program, case evaluations include vocational testing using the verbal part of the WAIS, the Kuder Interest Inventory (Series BD) and the California Psychological Inventory. We are also quite interested in all reports prior to and after injury in terms of high school and college grades.

For those students applying to the University of California quadriplegic program, we have a regular referral procedure. Eligibility is determined by the district or branch office where the client resides. Then with close coordination between the project counselor and the counselor in the referring area, the above mentioned case evaluation information is secured. The case is then sent on loan or the important aspects requested are sent for review. Priority is given to those clients who can demonstrate the greatest potential to effectively utilize the program. The cases are then staffed at the University of California by a group which includes a representative of the Department of Rehabilitation, the medical director of Student Health Services, the psychiatrist, the hospital administrator, and the head of the counseling service at the University. If the client is felt capable of handling the program both medically as well as psychologically, an application is submitted to the Admissions Department at the University. When a case is turned down and it is felt that there may be undeveloped potential, the suggestion is made to the referring district that they might wish to sponsor the client in a nearby university or junior college in order for him to demonstrate as an active classroom member his potential for handling college training. Upon successful demonstration, the case can always be referred in the future for upper division or graduate training. It is our experience that the regular four year period for undergraduate training will take at least five if not five and a half years for a quadriplegic taking a reduced study load. When combined with two to three years for a master's degree and then possibly another two or three when working on a Ph.D., some plans can run eight to ten years in length.

Two clients are doing graduate work. One of these has had an offer to teach political science part-time next year, and it may well be necessary to supply this particular polio quad with a vehicle so that his attendant may drive him back and forth to his teaching position. This adds additional financial responsibility to working with this particular group of clients.

2. Academic Goals and Eligibility (continued): It is the responsibility of the student to provide the Department of Rehabilitation with the grade slips received at the end of each quarter, and to discuss his current progress and his plans for the following term. As all students have vocational goals necessitating graduate training, each is expected to maintain a "B" average in his major field of study.

STAFF AND SUPERVISION:

The staff most intimately involved with this project includes the Rehabilitation Nurse, a Physiatrist, Urologist, Psychiatrist, Plastic Surgeon, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Hospital Administrator and a male Orderly hired by the hospital for the daytime shift.

Due to the complexities involved with coordinating services for this disability group, and in order to provide continued counseling, the project counselor meets with the students as a group once a week in addition to seeing them individually when the need arises.

A large number of the students living at Cowell have initiated contact with the Staff Psychiatrist and meet with him as a group one night a week. No request has been made for payment of this service to the Department of Rehabilitation.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

See Methodology above.

DISABILITIES TO BE SERVED:

This program serves severely disabled quadriplegic, triplegic and paraplegic clients. Due to the change in program counselors, and changes in the referral procedure, the project is not growing at the rate anticipated in the initial application.

To date the project has served 12 clients with one drop-out due to emotional problems. Two more clients will be starting with the summer quarter and one, a graduate student, will enter the University in the Fall of 1969. Seven additional clients are in referral status.

A measure of the interest in this problem is the following: Thirteen vocational rehabilitation offices have made inquiries about the program, including questions from Maryland, Texas and New York; six county welfare departments have sought information; and specific inquiries have been made on behalf of 31 potential clients.

Following the revised referral procedure, three additional applicants are undergoing initial evaluation in their home districts prior to formal referral.

ESTIMATED FUNDS UNDER SECTION 2:

The estimate in the application suggested twenty clients which, at $3,500 a year, equals $70,000 per year. As of March 31, 1969 Case Service Quarterly Report, the Cowell Residence Program, Code 641, had encumbered $28,335.93 for 11 clients. As of February 1, 1968, there were six clients living at Cowell Memorial Hospital. One client who started June 1967 dropped out September 1968. Additions to the program were as follows: one in March 1968; one in June 1968; two in September 1968; two in January 1969 and two in June 1969.

One of these thirteen clients has an income in excess of $155 per month due to an accident settlement and thus is not on ATD. The Department of Rehabilitation is assuming his costs for tuition and books. Of the twelve remaining, the 641 project is covering those expenses not covered by ATD as none of the clients thus far qualify as a Social Security Trust Fund case.

It should be noted that students becoming adjusted to the University of California at Berkeley start by taking a reduced subject load, therefore expenses for typing and research assistants are not typical during this initial phase.

It is also recommended that careful consideration must be given each successful student in relation to feasible methods of transportation which will be required for him to get back and forth to his place of employment. In some cases a vehicle will have to be provided that an attendant can drive, and in other cases of C5-6 quadriplegics and lower levels, vehicles which can be adapted for driving from an electric wheelchair should be considered.

Specifically, the responsibility of the Department of Rehabilitation towards the rehabilitation plan lies in the area of financial assistance for room and board costs (over and above that allowed by ATD), tuition, books and supplies, secretarial assistance (which in some cases averages ten hours a week at $2.00 an hour dependent on the number of papers the students have to write), research assistants (who are paid between $2.00 and $2.75 an hour to go to the library and select books for the students), equipment not otherwise supplied by ATD (such as hollow or solid-core doors with 30-inch legs to be put in the student's room to use as a desk), and initial help with transportation costs which consists of allowing the student to pay a wheelchair "pusher" $2.00 an hour to push their non-electric wheelchair while they are getting acquainted with the campus. The Department of Rehabilitation is also paying for tutoring for some of our beginning and ongoing students in languages and for assistance in writing English papers. The students hire these tutors from Student Placement Service who with recommendations from their particular departments apply for tutoring positions. The average cost for the Department of Rehabilitation's participation in this program appears to be in the neighborhood of $3,000 to $4,500 per student, per year.

DURATION OF THE PROJECT:

February 1, 1968 to January 31, 1973 appears appropriate for exploration of the services needed to assist severely disabled clients in extended academic programs. However, as few of the currently enrolled clients will have completed their academic programs by January 31, 1973, ongoing provisions must be anticipated for covering the costs incurred by this method of rehabilitation training.

SUMMARY

This innovative project was designed to provide Vocational Rehabilitation services to a group of severely disabled quadriplegic, triplegic, and paraplegic clients who need special services in a university setting, in order to become vocationally rehabilitated. These severely disabled clients are receiving rehabilitative nursing, physical therapy, medical consultation, occupational therapy, tutoring, and other ancillary services within a special residential unit. These services are allowing them to successfully compete in a university academic setting.

Throughout the state there are severely disabled youth who have high potential for vocational rehabilitation via academic training. Because of the severity of their disabilities, the concomitant health problems and problems of logistics, college or university training can be so haphazard and cumbersome as to completely obstruct and prevent rehabilitation.

It is only through the cooperation of the University, their Student Health Service, and the Department of Rehabilitation, through this innovative project, that these high-potential clients can utilize this potential for independent living. Their high-potential is verified by their acceptance under the University's rigid admission screening policies. Without this service this group of young people would be life-long dependents on the State at very high costs.

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SERVICES TO HANDICAPPED STUDENTS EXPANDED

Until recently, no coordinated program of services for handicapped students was available at U.C. Berkeley. Besides this special project the services that were available were fragmented and, in many cases, limited.

As of this writing, an effort to coordinate and expand these services was recently made with the appointment of an on-campus counselor for all handicapped students attending U.C. Berkeley.

Mr. Kenneth Englebach, District Administrator of the Oakland District Office, announced at a meeting of the Dean of Students that "every effort will be made to adequately serve every handicapped student who attends U. C. Berkeley. With this in mind, all of the services of Vocational Rehabilitation on campus will be coordinated under one on-campus counselor." At the present time approximately 60 disabled students are receiving services from Vocational Rehabilitation. These services include payment of tuition, fees, books and supplies; tutorial and reader services for the blind; vocational counseling and guidance as well as assistance in job placement.